

Evaluating Sources – RCBCA Test

Relevance

Does the information fit with your topic?
Does the information contribute to your research?
How in-depth or comprehensive is the information?

Where to look when evaluating web sources:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Start by looking for a summary, abstract, headings, or section titles (these may give you a quick idea what the information is about).• Determine relevance first, because if it isn't relevant there's no need to continue evaluating the source.

Credibility

Is the author identified?
What are the credentials of the author or organization?
Is the author or organization respected by others in the field?

Where to look when evaluating web sources:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check the "About Us" page.• Look for and check into the sponsoring agency of the website.• Look for and find out about the author(s) of the web article by finding his/her own website.

Bias (i.e. Point of View / Purpose)

Why was the information written?
Who is the intended audience?
Is there a particular focus or interest? Is it promoting something, selling a product, or giving propaganda?

Where to look when evaluating web sources:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check the "About Us" and "Contact Us" pages• Look for affiliations and associations.• Look for a mission and/or vision statement.• Look at press releases and/or newsletters.

Currency

When was the information published/posted or last updated/revised?
Does your topic require current information or are older sources useful as well?
How current is the data or evidence?

Where to look when evaluating web sources:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Look for dates on web articles and/or web pages (often found at the top or bottom of the page).• Is the web page well maintained?• TIP: If all you find is TODAY'S DATE, chances are, it has been programmed to automatically display current date/time. DO NOT assume the information was actually updated today.

Accuracy (i.e. information vs misinformation vs disinformation)

Are facts and stats documented?
Are references, citations, or links to other sources included?
How does the information compare to other sources? Is it backed by scholarly research or scientific study?

Where to look when evaluating web sources:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be wary if facts and stats are undocumented• TIP: While top-level domains (.com, .net, .org, .edu, .gov, .mil, .int, etc.) may give a clue about the quality of a website, NEVER ASSUME a site is credible or accurate on that basis alone.• ALL WEBSITES NEED TO BE EVALUATED!